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NEW SOLAR PANEL ARRAY TO PROVIDE 40% OF COLLEGE'S ELECTRICITY

By EVAN WEISS
News Editor

Middlebury College President Laurie Patton cut the ribbon to officially open the South Street Extension solar array on Thursday, Oct. 24, unveiling a project that will now provide 40% of the college's total electricity. The college hosted the event along with the developer, Encore Renewable Energy, and owner and operator, Greenbacker Renewable Energy Company.

Thursday marked the culmination of a three-year project which broke ground on Oct. 12, 2021. The array was built as part of Energy2028, Middlebury's commitment to use 100% renewable energy and reduce the college's energy consumption by 25% by 2028; to divest from fossil fuels by 2034; and to foster interdisciplinary educational engagement with the initiative.

The private ribbon-cutting event was attended by members of the college administration, Encore, Greenbacker and several local news outlets. Founder and co-CEO of Encore Chad Farrell opened the event by thanking the college for seeing through on a "solar coaster" of a project. He explained how this project aligned with the Burlington-based company's principles.

"As a B Corp, we believe in the foundational principles of people, planet and profit, and this project is a perfect example of that," Farrell said, adding that students played a central role that students played in advocating for sustainable practices.

"Were it not for the students of Middlebury College, this project would not be here. They really sort of championed the idea of having a locally cited, local generation of clean renewable energy to support the campus," he said.

Both Patton and Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration David Provost echoed that students have been integral to establishing Energy2028 and to this solar array initiative.

"It's also included — and I want to make sure you all know this — input from our students who contributed to the solar array through research, project-based learning, signage and collaboration to remain, as they always push us to, at the forefront of climate productivity, of climate education and of climate justice," Patton said.

The array includes 15,348 solar panels which will generate about 10 million kilowatt-hours per year of energy for the Green Mountain Power electrical grid, where the college sources its energy, according to a college press release. Encore plans to install an eight-megawatt-hour battery alongside the array, which will store any excess energy produced.

COURTESY PHOTO / MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

President Laurie Patton stands with Encore Renewables employees after cutting the ribbon to open the new solar array on South Street Extension.

The site of the array was chosen for several reasons, including its proximity to Green Mountain

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Jewish-Israeli journalist Amira Hass reflects on three decades in Gaza

By PHOEBE AN
Staff Writer

As a Jewish-Israeli journalist embedded in the long-term historical conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, Amira Hass lives between worlds.

Hass has lived and reported in Gaza for the past three decades, including the first six months of the current conflict; in her role as a reporter, she documents what she described as a genocide targeting Palestinians. She called the conflict "an ongoing Nakba," an Arabic term which means "catastrophe" and is used to describe the loss of Palestinian lands in 1948 following the establishment of Israel.

On Monday, Oct. 28, Hass spoke to an audience of over 100 Middlebury students and faculty in Wilson Hall about her experiences in Gaza and how she has come to understand the nature of this conflict.

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STUDENTS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS GATHER TO CELEBRATE DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

By MICHAELA LAWSKY
Contributing Writer

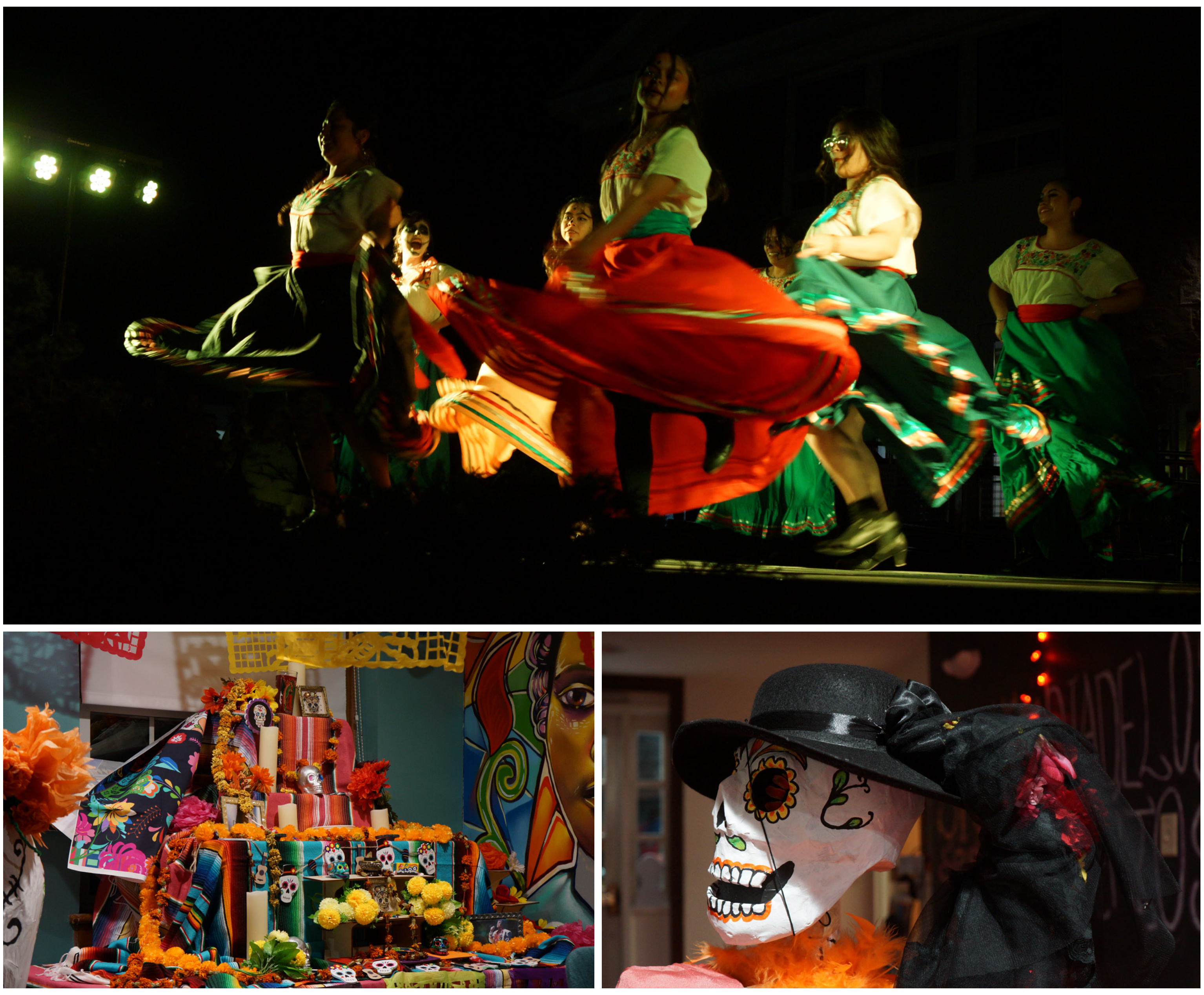
On Saturday, Nov. 2, the college hosted its third annual Día de los Muertos (DDM) celebration. The procession began in front of the Anderson Freeman Center (AFC), where a group of about 30 Middlebury students, faculty and residents from the town gathered to learn about and celebrate the holiday. Programming for the celebration included a Catholic Mass at St. Mary's Church, a trio of songs by the college choir and a number of small art projects and performances located throughout campus.

Día de los Muertos is a Mexican holiday on Nov. 1 and 2 during which communities come together to pay respects to family and friends who have passed. The holiday serves as a reminder that while material possessions are ultimately transitory, the bonds of love and affection transcend death.

Planning for the Día de los Muertos celebration began over the summer. The DDM team — led by Isbeth Bustos-Arellano '26 and backed by several student, staff and faculty volunteers — worked to ensure that the valued traditions associated with Día de los Muertos could be thoroughly represented at the college. According to Bustos-Arellano, attendance at the celebrations appeared to double from previous years.

Students expressed curiosity about the holiday and how Middlebury would fashion a celebration of the occasion.

"I'm really interested in learning more about the holiday and how it's celebrated," said Miranda Hurwitz '28. "I've never had the chance to observe it but often see the day represented in movies and media, and I'm excited to see how Middlebury contributes to it."



IDANESI OJIOR / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Dancers performed baile folklórico, a mexican folk dance, in front of Proctor Dining Hall. Over 100 people visited eight ofrendas on McCullough lawn to pay their respects and observe Día de los Muertos.

The holiday has deep pre-Columbian roots and is not inherently a Catholic holiday; however, it coincides with the Catholic observance of All Saints' Day, and many Mexicans identify as Catholic. As a result, religion is intertwined with the holiday, even though it can be and often is celebrated independently of religious practices. For Middlebury's celebration, a mass was held on the evening of Saturday, Nov. 2, where individuals could pray for and honor their loved ones in the spirit of the holiday.

As the procession met in front of the Anderson Freeman Center (AFC) and headed to St. Mary's, musicians among the marchers played traditional Mexican folk songs such as "De Colores" and "Cielito Lindo." Participants carried sculptures of La Catrina, the central symbol of Día de los Muertos, which represents the cycle of life and death, and of a Calavera, a skull that has also become a symbol of the holiday.

The mass was led by Fr. Tim Danaher, a Dominican friar who serves as Director and Chaplain of the Aquinas House at Dartmouth College. Danaher, who travels to Addison County monthly to hold

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College unveils solar array

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Power power lines and because this tract of college-owned land would never be used for core educational purposes, according to Provost. The college had originally planned to locate the array on a more concealed hill west of the current site but moved the project lower, largely for economic reasons, according to prior reporting by The Campus.

Neighbors were informed of the array's location but were not consulted throughout the decision-making process, according to South Street Extension resident and Dean of the Library Mike Roy.

A larger issue, he believes, is that the town of Middlebury has no formal plan for siting large-scale solar projects. Having such a plan would, in theory, give the town preference in contesting a developer's project before the Vermont Public Utility Commission (PUC), a state body that issues these permits.

"My sense is that these things might go more smoothly if these conversations happen earlier and involve… a kind of community process to sort out where [they] should go and then, for those who are impacted by it, what would the community benefits be of such installations," Roy said.

The nearby town of Panton, Vt. is currently contesting a proposed 300-acre solar field because it does not comply with the town's Enhanced Energy Plan. This is the first developer–town conflict before the PUC and will provide insight into how much weight town planning is afforded before the state commission.

He added that from his own perspective and from what he has read, when developers make firm commitments to providing community benefits alongside the development project, it is far more palatable to neighbors.

Such community benefits were proposed by the 2022–2023 Middlebury Environmental Council — an advisory group composed of students, faculty and staff — which envisioned promoting inclusive student and community engagement with the land by adding outdoor classroom spaces and building trails that connect to the Trail Around Middlebury (TAM), among other efforts.

"Those of us who live out here were kind of excited about getting, you know, an enhanced trail, so that we can more easily connect to the TAM," Roy said.

The current Environmental Council has no projects focused on the solar site, according to Jack Byrne, dean of sustainability and environmental affairs and co-chair of the council.

Now that the solar array is active, regulations stipulate that additional land be conserved.

The land for the solar project was zoned through a Certificate of Public Good permit from the PUC, which requires that land double the size being used for development be set aside in a "management parcel."

Associate Laboratory Professor of Environmental Studies and College Lands Conservationist Marc Lapin explained in an email to The Campus that in line with Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department guidelines, this parcel must provide habitat to grassland birds, meaning that the hay cannot be mowed for some time during nesting season to allow baby birds to fledge and safely leave their nests.

The proposed management parcel includes 95 acres of fields just north of the South Street solar array as well as 21 acres of the Jackson Lands in Cornwall.

At the Thursday ribbon-cutting, under an ironically cloud-covered sky, Patton closed her remarks by paying tribute to the history of deriving energy from the sun.

"As many of you know, I'm a student of ancient mythology, and the number one thing that brought people together, according to early theorists of mythology, was the honoring and worship of the sun," Patton said. "It's about as ancient as it gets, gathering around the sun and allowing the sun to power us in new ways. So I want to remind everyone that we are both super innovative and super ancient."

COURTESY PHOTO / MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

IDANESI OJIOR / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Ofrendas, altars with offerings for the dead, remember loved ones.

STUDENTS, COMMUNITY MEMBERS GATHER TO CELEBRATE DÍA DE LOS MUERTOS

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Spanish masses for the migrant community, was instrumental in organizing the first Día de los Muertos celebration at Middlebury in collaboration with Assistant Professor of Theatre Olga Sanchez Saltveit.

Danaher explained his involvement with the programming and how it blends the different cultures of Middlebury and the holiday's Mexican origins.

"This is our third year, so we basically do a mass with all the migrants, and then the students and professors of Middlebury have prepared this tour through campus with different traditions," Danaher said, gesturing at the surrounding ofrendas and performances. "It's sort of a creative adaptation, but it's really authentic, and it's authentic to Middlebury and to Mexico."

At the conclusion of the service, the procession group grew to approximately 100 people. It then made its way from St. Mary's Church to McCullough lawn, where eight ofrendas — altars with offerings for the spirits of the dead — stood with candles, papel picado, and photos of loved ones. Participants walked among them, paying their respects to the dead and adding personal photos or mementos.

Armelle Crouzières-Ingenthron, the J. Harvey Watson professor of French & Francophone Studies, shared her reflections on the event after participating in the celebration.

"November 1 is a holiday in France too," Crouziéres-Ingenthron said. "We celebrate the dead by putting flowers on their tombs. But I love the Mexican tradition because there's music and food, and people are upbeat… It's very personal and, at the same time, unifying."

At the top of chapel hill on campus, the Middlebury choir performed songs including "La Bruja," "La Llorona" and "Amor Eterno." The final of the three is a common Spanish funeral song. Its message of love, death and togetherness encapsulates the main theme Día de los Muertos. As the music played, the voices of the processionists mingled with those of the choir.

Performances continued around campus that evening. With their faces adorned in skull paint, four theater students told the story of La Llorona in front of Gifford Hall. This haunting Mexican folktale describes a vengeful spirit who haunts bodies of water and can be heard wailing loudly for her children who drowned. Across the road, dancers performed Baile folklórico — a Mexican folk dance — in front of Proctor Dining Hall in traditional blue and red skirts.

The event concluded at Perkins House, the Spanish House on campus, where people could contribute to a community ofrenda and enjoy refreshments and food.

To add to the festivities, a special meal comprised of a variety of traditional Mexican food was served in Proctor Dining Hall on Friday evening for dinner, including pozole rojo, tostadas de tinga, beef empanadas and chicken tamales wrapped in banana leaves. Mexican coffee — a sweet drink made with coffee, cinnamon, cocoa and whipped cream — was also served.

Bustos-Arellano first met with Chris Laframboise, a dining services chef at Proctor, in September to plan this meal, sharing with him the Mexican recipes she grew up with. The recipes were then tweaked due to challenges in acquiring the proper ingredients and dining hall staffing shortages. In subsequent meetings, Bustos-Arellano was able to taste test some of the dishes before the special meal, when she and Laframboise finalized the menu together.

"I am grateful that Chris stepped up to help and be open to learning. I was even more happy to see the reactions of students when they saw the conchas, ate the flan and learned about the special meal." she wrote to The Campus. "For me, it's important to be able to have the meals you grew up with so that it brings us closer and because that's my love language."

Bustos-Arellano also emphasized her gratitude for the many volunteers that were eager to come together to help the community celebrate the tradition.

While the event is designed to bring together the Mexican community in and around Middlebury, it also offers an educational opportunity for people who have had no prior exposure to the holiday, giving them a chance to learn about the traditions and cultural significance of Día de los Muertos and participate in the celebration. The Día de los Muertos celebration has united the community and created a space to share love and sorrow, joy and fear.

"[Fr. Danaher] explained it really well as a passage. It's not the end," Crouzières said. "It's the beginning of something else. And I found that very comforting."

Editor's Note: Managing Editor Madeleine Kaptein '25.5 contributed reporting to this article.

JEWISH-ISRAELI JOURNALIST AMIRA HASS REFLECTS ON THREE DECADES IN GAZA

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Emphasizing the deaths of over 41,000 Palestinians since last October because of Israel's current assault and limitations on humanitarian aid, Hass began by speaking urgently on the increasingly bleak conditions Palestinians endure in Gaza.

"At this moment, when just meeting here and sitting here on this campus, a yet unknown number of Palestinian children in Gaza are likely to be killed or severely wounded by an Israeli bomb dropped through the air, or a shell launched by a tank, or by bullets," she told the audience.

While Hass's anecdotes of violence in Israel and Gaza are from the present, she came with a message to impart to listeners: that this collective agony of Palestinians and Israelis is a continuation of a historical struggle that started long before Oct. 7, 2023.

Hass grounded the history of the Israel-Palestine conflict by telling the audience to look beyond the rhetorical and historiographical constraints imposed by two terms: binarism and symmetrism. She framed these two concepts as essential to understanding the history of the conflict and moving towards peace.

According to Hass, it is insufficient to view history through binarism — viewing any one group as purely good or purely evil — because doing so serves to justify the methods of the "good side."

Hass connected this term to her own approach to the conflict, asserting her conviction to remain outside of binarism.

"I retain my right to be non-binary," she said, "to acknowledge and feel the pain of people, and not only to feel totally disgusted by the Israeli government's and society's murderous campaign against the Palestinians, but also to question the wisdom of Palestinian leaders' responses."

She also advised listeners to consider abandoning symmetrism, the idea that ideological conflict must exist on equal terms. While both sides may have experienced harm, to approach their goals and grief in the same way does not create a substantial or effective framework for peace.

Hass further discussed the 1993 Oslo Accords and their failures, stating that the Oslo Accords were a considerable compromise of Palestinian land. She concluded that the expansion of Israeli settlements and Palestinian communities dissolving into enclaves created a direct pipeline to the current conditions of the Palestinians, whom she claimed are considered second-class citizens.

"Any Jew in the audience, in a matter of days, can have more rights in the West Bank and in the whole country than any Palestinians. Any one of you who is Jewish can become an Israeli citizen, can live wherever she or he wants to live, to get work permits, to travel freely, to marry whoever you want to marry. These are normal rights, but they are abnormal because the indigenous people don't have these rights," Hass said.

Her criticism was not only targeted at the Israeli government, but also at political parties and armed resistance groups such as Hamas and Fatah. In reference to the Second Intifada, which occurred between 2000 and 2005, Hass argued that armed struggle failed to stop colonist powers, which she claimed led to greater suffering.

"The separation wall was built, devoured tens of thousands of agricultural land, and made people more impoverished than before, and allowed the settlements to strengthen under the critics of security," Hass said.

Questioning the motives of armed groups such as Hamas, Hass pushed for a critical examination of their role within Palestinian resistance in light of the Oct. 7 attack.

"Why [is] the failure of the armed struggle to stop the colonialist power and its settler colonial project forgivable or overlooked by many Palestinians and supporters?" Hass asked. "Why [is] their partial or full failure given as a full justification to the October 7 attack by so many Palestinians and pro-Palestinians?"

She later expounded more on this assessment of armed resistance, emphasizing that the attack was the decision of a group of mostly men. Hass urges the audience to consider the overall destructiveness made possible by modern technology and mass weapons of destruction, and therefore the capacity of armed conflicts. To Hass, movements of armed resistance cannot think so futuristically that they disregard the lives of the people today.

Hass's arguments on armed resistance garnered criticism from some students and faculty. In an email to The Campus, Assistant Professor of Gender, Sexuality, and Feminist Studies Cynthia Gao, who studies 20th century Third World liberation movements, disagreed with Hass and argued that armed resistance could be seen as a political response to structural conditions.

"I do not take the loss of life lightly. I agree that armed struggle should not be romanticized, particularly by those of us who have not experienced its direct costs. But the persistence of armed struggle as an anti-colonial strategy points to the central contradiction of colonial rule," Gao wrote.

Gao expanded on the idea of that contradiction. She stated that the technical capacity and desire of a colonial force to slaughter colonized populations should theoretically mean that they would succeed, and that resistance against this is futile — and many colonial powers hold this to be true. However, she believes this is incorrect.

"Many colonial powers have fallen, because of this hubristic belief that technological and military superiority will ensure their dominance in perpetuity," Gao wrote.

Gao also underscored her disagreement with Hass on how to conceptualize armed resistance.

"Hass noted that before October 7th, Gazans could, without resorting to armed struggle, live some semblance of a life, albeit in a jail, in a cage. From what I know, people cannot live in cages forever, and rarely are their attempts to break free ever deemed acceptable to their jailers," Gao wrote.

For some audience members, hearing Hass address the violence in Gaza explicitly was both refreshing and troubling, given a lack of a clear course of action to ending the conflict. One student who attended the talk described their experience of listening to Hass.

"Hearing Hass use the term genocide and firmly criticize the actions of the Israeli government [in] Gaza feels relieving to myself and I'm sure to others who have found themselves forced to step around possible rhetorical pitfalls for the 'validity' of their arguments," one student who attended the talk wrote to The Campus. "Like many others in the audience, however, I found myself once again waiting for a hypothesis of productive action."

Talking Trash: How much does Middlebury really recycle?

ASA STONE/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Recycling is commonly contaminated by non-recyclable trash, which sends entire bags of recycling to the landfill.

By ASA STONE
Staff Writer

The inner workings of Middlebury's 30-year-old Recycling Center on College Street is a mystery to much of the Middlebury community. Whether Middlebury actually recycles, how it recycles and how one should effectively recycle on campus remain common questions even 30 years after the Recycling Center opened.

"In one of my classes, a bunch of students raised their hands and said that they had heard that Middlebury no longer recycles… and honestly I kind of believe that," said Cara Fritz '25.

Despite popular misconceptions, all recycling collected from blue bins in residence halls and academic buildings is transported on trucks, taken out of plastic bags and put into the recycling packer — a large storage container in the recycling center — which travels bi-weekly to the Addison County Solid Waste Management District. Smaller packers are located outside each of the dining halls and are driven to the transfer station more frequently.

After reaching the management district, located on Vermont Route 7 in Middlebury, the college's recycling is loaded onto a recycling trailer and transported to the Materials Recycling Facility in Williston, Vt., according to the facility's Public Outreach Coordinator Emily Johnston. This facility sorts out paper, plastic and metals.

Before recycling goes out to Williston, the college's recycling center employs a method called "zero-sort," which is a single-bin recycling tactic that allows for disposal of recyclable materials together without sorting them.

The no-sort policy means that if a bag of "recycling" is contaminated with paper towels or cups full of liquid — or during the Covid-19 pandemic, face masks — it immediately goes to the trash. This allows staff to be more efficient and streamline processes but also decreases the percentage of waste recycled. Currently, it is up to the individual facility services employees to decide whether they have time to manually open bags of recycling and remove the trash, according to Facilities Team Liaison for Waste Management Doug Smith. If they do not — which is most often the case, due to staffing shortages — a trash-filled recycling bin becomes landfill-bound no matter its content.

While zero-sort recycling decreases barriers to recycling by allowing people to throw all recyclable materials into one bin, Smith said he thinks this system may contribute to student confusion.

"If you look in a container now, you see paper, cans, bottles, stuff like that, so if you're looking quickly at it, it looks like a mixture of everything… you might think anything can go in there," Smith said.

Before the creation of the Recycling Center behind the Ridgeline Residence Complex's parking lot in 1998, students spearheaded recycling efforts on campus by collecting the trash from residence halls and academic buildings and sorting it for disposal beginning in the early 1990s, according to Kim Bickham, supervisor for waste management and custodian.

"You could say that Middlebury was somewhat ahead of the game," Smith said.

Since then, though, the amount of student engagement has significantly decreased, according to Smith.

Covid-19 served as a negative turning point for Middlebury recycling. Bickham said that before the pandemic the Recycling Center employed seven to eight full-time staff members and saw up to 30 student volunteers every week; this number is now zero.

After the Covid-19 pandemic, the Recycling Center stopped sorting recycling due to labor shortages and staff reallocation. The center currently has four full-time and two part-time staff members.

According to the yearly Waste and Recycling report, the percentage of total waste sent to the landfill in 2018 was 29.5%, which rose to 54.6% in 2020. As some sorting has returned, a decrease in that percentage has occurred over the past couple years, seeing 40.7% of all waste sent to the landfill in 2023.

One of the issues impeding the college's ability to improve recycling efforts is a lack of funding, according to Bickham.

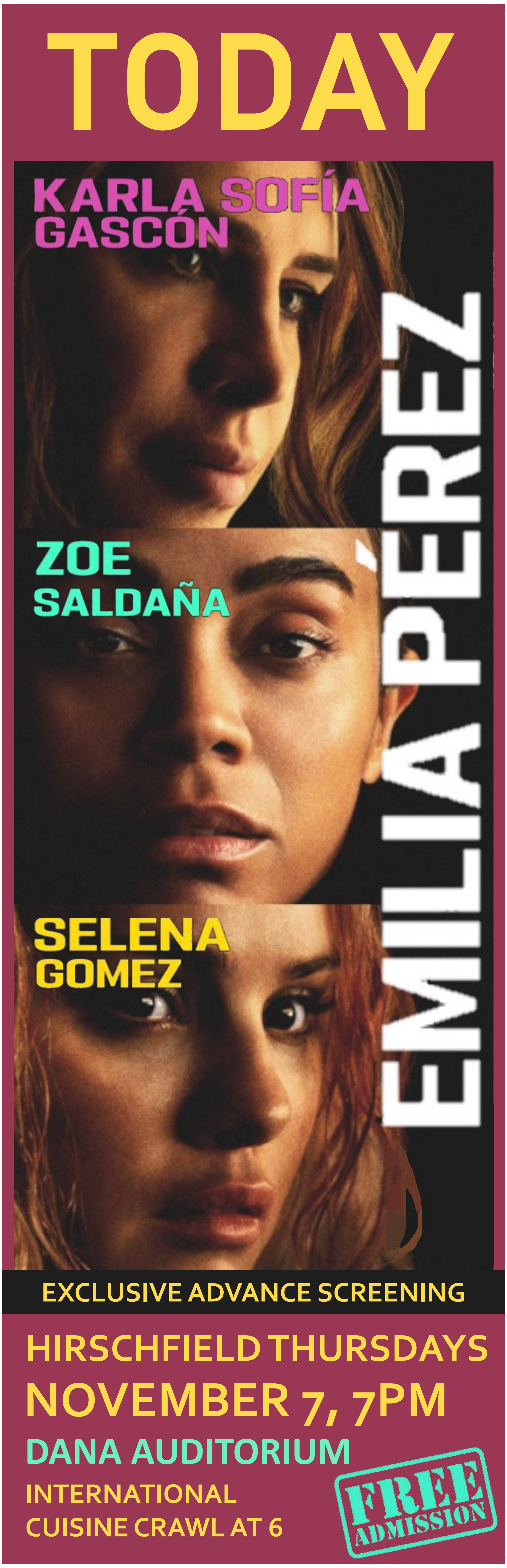
"I'm an advocate for going back to sorting. But, I've been told that there is no way we go back to sorting, it is just not economical," Bickham told The Campus.

Smith, Bickham and Johnston all emphasized education as a major solution to negative recycling trends on campus.

"What is proven to work are routine reminders about what can and cannot be recycled that are clear, concise, and consistent. These reminders could be sortation signs, pamphlets, stickers, magnets, or other materials that showcase what is recyclable and what is not in an easy-to-understand manner," Johnston wrote in an email to The Campus.

Bickham thinks that if Middlebury students were more compelled to help out in the recycling center, the recycling trends on campus might flip for the better.

"If every student had to work a two-hour shift in the recycling center once a year they would understand the cause and effect of their habits. Maybe then things would start to change," Bickham said.



BUY AGAIN ALLEY BRINGS YOUNG PEOPLE INTO THE WORLD OF THRIFTING

By **NOOR KHAN**
Layout Editor

In the center of downtown Middlebury, the thrift store Buy Again Alley caters its clothing selection specifically to young people, distinguishing it from the town's four other thrift stores. As a nonprofit, its mission is to support young people in their creative endeavors and bring them into the world of thrifting.

Executive Director Jeanette Gyukeri emphasized the importance of creating inclusive spaces for younger community members.

"We realized that younger people need spaces that are theirs, or that they feel they belong in and like they're not someone's kid, or spaces [where] they're not being looked at or followed. A space where they can just be authentically themselves," Gyukeri said.

The team at Buy Again Alley has created several initiatives to accomplish this goal. The store is open until 7 p.m. on Thursdays to host Midd Night, where Middlebury College student ID holders receive a 20% discount on most items, excluding those made by local artists. It also hosts Sunday Fundays every Sunday afternoon, allowing people to exchange clothes in good condition for store credit.

"Most things end up here because they no longer make someone else happy, or they no longer fit their lives in some way. And then someone will come up to the register with something they are so excited about, they cannot believe what they've found," Gyukeri said.

The store's efforts to empower young people reach beyond their racks of on-trend clothing: For the past eight years, the company's profits have funded the Buy Again Alley Scholarship. This scholarship donates money to young adults pursuing a non-traditional path after high school by providing gap year travel funds, seed money for startups, uniforms for apprenticeships, or in the case of store employee Jakob Loven, equipment that will allow him to reproduce his art without a vendor.

"I often ask people that come in and buy something really cool, 'What are you going to put this with? Do you have a specific outfit in mind, or are you just planning on seeing where this goes?' I like visualizing what people are trying out," Loven said. He estimates about half of his closet is clothes from Buy Again Alley.

"Something I love about coming in here is that you can come in and find 200 different stores in one," said Suzy Hunt, another employee at the store.

Over time, the store's selection has grown to include more popular brands. It's not uncommon to find a Patagonia vest or an Old Navy sweater significantly marked down in the Buy Again Alley racks. Gyukeri noted the crop top section as an area of the store that helps fill a niche other thrift stores do not.

Beyond premium shopping access, employees agreed that one of the best parts of working at Buy Again Alley is interacting with the diverse clientele.

"I can come to work and meet people from around the world, that come to me. I'm not going to be traveling around the world, but I get to meet people, and I get to learn their stories," Hunt said.

When students from the Middlebury Language Schools come to Vermont during the summer, Loven tries to practice the little bits of different languages he knows. "I think it helps them feel at home as well," Loven said.

"The store, as Suzy and Jeanette always say, has a magic," Loven said. "You put some vibes onto a piece of clothing and it sells, and I think the magic is really alive here."

The store's unique feel is thanks in large part to its employees.

"This sweater I wanted was missing the tassel and [the owner] fixed it right then and there," said Meredith Abbot '28. "While she did that, we got to chatting about how we both love old homes! She was just very personable and kind."

The opportunity for a good bargain is a common draw to thrifting, but buying second hand is also a way to be more environmentally conscious in your daily life — another component of Buy Again Alley's mission, according to Hunt.

"I believe very strongly in the recycling world, and that everything, no matter what, can have a second chance — humans or clothing," Hunt said.

The store accepts clothes in imperfect condition, preferring to mend or wash them rather than trash. Hunt explained that she often uses a tear or stain as an opportunity to transform an item, like bleach-dying jeans, making each piece more unique and appealing to customers.

"It's important to try and avoid fast fashion, even though it's so hard sometimes, especially with being a college student and wanting to be up to date with the trends," Abbott said. "I think this is a fun and easy way to [practice sustainability]."

As the only thrift store on Main Street, Buy Again Alley is conveniently situated near Middlebury's campus, welcoming students to shop, donate or simply stop by for a chat.

"If you continue to go to the same place over the four years of being a student at Middlebury, you'll get to know the townspeople, for sure, but they'll also get to know you," Hunt said. "And that's pretty special."

BUY AGAIN ALLEY

NOOR KHAN / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
Buy Again Alley takes pride in mending, curating, and helping customers find new life in pre-loved pieces, all while supporting the community.

Middlebury Congregational Church celebrates 100th annual Holiday Bazaar

By **MANDY BERGHELA**
Senior Local Editor

Community members gathered at the Congregational Church of Middlebury (UCC) to celebrate the 100th annual Holiday Bazaar, which ran from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 2.

Since 1924, the Holiday Bazaar has been a cherished tradition at the UCC, drawing generations of locals from Middlebury and across Addison County together in the spirit of community and celebration to support the church.

Associate Pastor at UCC Rev. Elizabeth Gleich highlighted the significance of the Holiday Bazaar in an email to The Campus, describing it as more than just a sale.

"The Holiday Bazaar has been a cherished tradition for over 100 years," Gleich said. "It's a community-building event that draws people from across Addison County, many of whom look forward to it each year. While they come to find unique items at good prices, they also appreciate how the church opens its doors to everyone."

Long-time attendees of the Bazaar remarked on how, despite the changing displays and various tables each year, the event retains a comforting sense of familiarity that marks the start of the holiday season. The Bazaar has offered similar items year after year, preserving a tradition that community members have come to cherish, according to reporting by the Addison Independent.

"Each table was managed and supplied by church members who donated their time, talents, and goods," Gleich said. "Every item for sale was a donation from friends and members of the church. We estimate that more than 60 people contributed to making this year's Holiday Bazaar a success."

Each year, the Bazaar is typically split between the two levels of the church. This year, visitors who entered the first floor of the fellowship hall immediately encountered a holiday marketplace, transporting visitors into a winter wonderland. The garden table, overflowing with donated plants ranging from Amaryllis to various seasonal species, was a vibrant centerpiece. Toward the back, children's tables offered puzzles for two dollars and a selection of stuffed animals. Church members also contributed baked goods, which were available for purchase.

The second floor of the fellowship hall featured a wide array of handcrafted items, including blankets, jewelry, scarves and a gently used book sale. A highlight of the event each year is the church's raffle, and this year, attendees had the chance to win a 91" x 81" quilt titled "Round About."

This is the church's sole fundraiser each year and all of the proceeds go to supporting the ministry, according to Gleich.

While she was unsure of the exact number of guests in attendance, Judy Jessup, co-chair of the Bazaar, said it was a success.

"We had a steady flow of people at both entrances from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event was well received by both the church community and the wider Addison County area, and the weather was cooperative too," Jessup said in an interview with The Campus.

The church itself was established in 1790 as the Church of Christ in Middlebury, and throughout its history has been active in the community. Today, the church remains operational with nearly 300 members and continues to engage in worship and community service. It is part of the United Church of Christ (UCC), a denomination formed in 1957.

The Middlebury UCC is located on 30 North Pleasant Street off of Main Street, and students are encouraged to get involved in the many different activities and events in the church, regardless of religious affiliation.

"Students can get involved in many ways — by attending our Sunday morning services, our monthly Taizé service on the 4th Sunday at 4 p.m., or by volunteering at our Friday Night Community Supper," Gleich wrote. "They're also welcome to assist with Children and Youth programming, join the choir, or participate in Adult Study Programs. We're a very active church, eager to welcome people of all ages!"

COURTESY PHOTO / ELIZABETH GLEICH
Buy Again Alley takes pride in mending, curating, and helping customers find new life in pre-loved pieces, all while supporting the community.

Vermont bats, facing serious decline, thrive in Middlebury area

By **LANGAN GARRETT**
Contributing Writer

Vermont's bat population, like many across the country, is in trouble. For over a decade, a fungal disease called White-nose syndrome (WNS) has devastated bat populations nationwide. The disease has spread from the east to west coast in both the U.S. and Canada, killing 90% or more of certain bat species, according to Alyssa Bennett, a small mammal biologist with the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife.

"Our understanding is that we likely, as humans, transported this fungus from underground sites in Europe over to underground sites here in the Northeast and West, and we accidentally introduced something that our native bat species had never seen before," Bennett said.

Bats play a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance by providing essential services to ecosystems across the country, including consumption of disease-carrying pests that pose significant dangers to humans such as mosquitoes.

"They are the primary forager on the night flying insects," Bennett said. "If you think about those types of insects giving rise to corn boring worms, which are really a detriment to agriculture, and then you also have bats eating caterpillar moths, or the forest caterpillar moth, which is damaging to trees and to forest health."

Some insects eaten by bats are not threats to humans, but rather their vegetables: Bennett explained that cucumber beetles that are eaten by these hungry mammals can pose a threat to people's gardens. In broader terms, the recovery of bat populations is crucial to Vermont's ecological health, according to Bennett.

The town of Middlebury and the surrounding areas boast one of the healthiest and most prolific bat populations in the state. Both Little Brown and Big Brown bats are found in the region, thanks to the warm valleys and varied landscapes that offer abundant natural habitats well-suited to raising their young, according to Bennett.

"You have a mix of agriculture and forested area," Bennett said, referring to the local area. "All of those elements, combined with a lot of structures that have things like slate roofs, which bats like to roost under, and then people have put up bat houses, and all of that has combined to what seems like a really great mix of habitats."

Bennett also outlined various solutions that can help bats rebound from their significant population decline in recent years, including bat houses, small wooden structures where bats can dwell instead of living invasively someone's house or in limited natural environments. They are especially helpful for female bats who need a safe place to raise their offspring.

"If people have bats that are in an attic and want to get them out, a bat house can be a good alternative for them, and we find that really successful on buildings, and also on poles, but never put them on trees, they just don't seem to do well on trees," Bennett said.

She added that bats usually opt to live in underground caves or mines in the winter, and that landowners should be aware that bats could be hibernating on their property.

Given that bats are found both in the town and on campus, it is especially important to be mindful of their cohabitation with humans.

"You are living pretty close to a lot of these animals that are providing a big ecosystem service, and yet there are very few, ever encountered. So give bats their space, they will give you your space, and we can work together really well," Bennett said.

COURTESY PHOTO / ALYSSA BENNETT

Vermont bats are battling a deadly fungus, but areas like Middlebury provide a crucial habitat that may help their

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SIMON PEARCE

WHAT WE HAVE IN COMMONS: ON INTELLECTUAL COMMUNITY AT MIDDLEBURY

Op-Ed

***Daniel Allen** and **Gage Schrier** are members of the class of 2024.5.*

Every other week in the second half of the 1980s, students gathered at Middlebury President John McCardell's house for what began as a book club. As Associate Professor of Political Science Sebnem Gumuscu tells the story, students and faculty packed onto sofas and rugs to socialize and discuss what they had read. The event, which inspired the commons system, put into practice the understanding that newly acquired ideas should change how you live your life. The commons system, which lasted from 1992 to 2019, was the institutionalization of such a principle.

The commons represented a culture of innovation that sought to bring about the ideal education. Our administration, students and faculty pushed to be less like everyone else; to create something better that embraced and cultivated the values of a liberal education. We believe that Middlebury has lost this spirit: Realism and market pressure have replaced passion as the chief arbiter of institutional direction.

We want to tell you the story of the commons so that everyone, even first years, can know what Middlebury was just 10 years ago.

Five residential communities — Ross, Brainerd, Wonnacott, Atwater and Cook — housed students for their first two years at Middlebury and provided Residential Assistants, counselors and deans to help establish a healthy community. Every commons had a central house where events were held, and where a professor, the "Commons Head," lived. Students' First Year Seminars were directly tied into the commons, and events, like champagne socials at graduation, helped students stay close. Middlebury education under the commons continued after class ended; scholarship, beyond just studying, is a practice of living well. The commons system embodied this. From day one of the student's experience, the commons structure intentionally stitched together the realm of ideas with everyday life.

Multiple times a week, lectures, club meetings and social events took place in the commons house living rooms. Students fondly remember the first German Coffee Hours, long, student-catered dinners, and champagne send-offs at graduation. Students sometimes donned shirts with their mascot, like Cook's flying pig. Events were not mandatory, but former commons heads like Professor of German & Comparative Literature Roman Graf and Maria Hatjigeorgiou remember the crowds these occasions attracted. Events weren't always intellectual in activity. Still, they got students and professors talking, removing the intellectual intimidation and divide between academics and "life" at Middlebury today. Curiosity cannot be taught, but it can be uncovered.

The commons existed only as long as our idealism. When a new administration was brought in to stabilize the school financially, the system was phased out, ostensibly to save money. While we need balanced books, the question of how exactly to define "cost" arises. The last decade has seen our focus from undergraduate experience to postgraduates at satellite campuses and administrative growth. Monterey is a financial blackhole with declining enrollment, and while the Princeton Review once said our administration "runs like butter," we can only recommend that headline to The Local Noodle today.

The commons system was not perfect. A 2019 campus survey found that while 50% of students were satisfied with the commons system, discontent stemmed from a "lack of interclass interaction that creates an isolating environment." However, the urge for "interaction" in the criticism of the commons legitimized its very purpose: community. These critiques were and are valid, but our primary concern is not that the commons itself was dismantled but that no meaningful replacement was instituted to address the central need of our community.

Our current administration promised us a replacement in the Compass mentorship program. Brian Conde-Martinez '25 and Vanessa Dator '25 remember Compass as a single meeting with their first year seminar, from which no lasting relationships sprouted. Neither of their originally assigned mentors ever met with them individually. Dator met with a replacement Compass mentor once in her second year, but she said that was the extent of the relationship. Conde-Martinez had no such luck. Speaking for ourselves, we did not even know these mentors existed.

Middlebury College is a different institution than four years ago when we arrived. We tracked the change with our own eyes. Student traditions, like exam-week midnight Ross, died out with the class of 2022; weekend frenzies at the Grille ceased in 2020; and it seems that even the social house Tavern might be in decline. Friday nights are eerily quiet compared to when we first arrived on campus. Covid-19 was billed as the bromide to our community's inability to form. Certainly, this was the explanation given to the class of 2024. This cannot be the case; this trend has been marching on for far longer than any pandemic.

We have been fed a "noble" lie: that the continuous erosion of our community is an act of fate. That there is nothing to be done, that this is natural, and most importantly, that there is no one to blame.

Without institutional memory, our administration can abuse the student body's myopia. Classes rotate in and out every four years. When we do, whatever knowledge of the institution we have vanishes unless it is recorded. We can not use history to correct the ills of our school if it does not exist.

Our forgetfulness benefits the administration, whose primary obligation switched from students to a balance sheet. Even this, they do not seem to do particularly well. Our satellite campuses lose the college millions every year, and our Vermont campus cannot retain their librarians. Our mismatch of priorities is reflected in the college's steady fall in the U.S. News & World Report rankings.

Historically, our community has been Middlebury's greatest strength. Relationships between faculty and peers have fostered intellectual curiosity, boldness and creativity that can only come from an institution with its students' interests at heart. Our administration's priorities have changed over this last decade.

Today, the commons are now reduced to meaningless memorials for a system we never experienced and our malnourished student-faculty community. We stand at a crossroads, and we hope that through this brief history, our paths can be made more clear. We can continue to watch our institution decline in complacent silence, or we can demand better, record the history we need to rely on to argue our case. Our college is endowed with a noble mission and the funds to pursue it; we should not settle for less.

Hepburn Hall
Brainerd Commons

RYAN MCELROY/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

A sign outside Hepburn Hall is still labeled "Brainerd Commons," leftover from when the system was still in place.

THE SEARCH FOR MIDDLEBURY'S NEXT PRESIDENT STARTS WITH ITS STAFF

Op-Ed

***Ali Salem** is a member of the class of 2016.*

Up front, to address the orange elephant in the room after Tuesday: It has never been more critical for Middlebury to properly invest in the staff that calls our college on a hill home.

I recently read an excellent article by Madeleine Kaptein '25.5 about Middlebury's 44% turnover rate in college librarians since February 2020. Beyond its illuminating reporting, it confirmed a problem that has plagued the college since (at least) my graduation in 2016. Middlebury has lost sight of cultivating a distinctive community and lacks a vision of how to unite and support its alumni, students, faculty and staff.

Here's what distinguished Middlebury from other competitive liberal arts institutions. First, a welcoming community of faculty and staff who had been part of the Middlebury community for decades. Second, alums who gushed about their time at Midd (Middlebury often ranked near the top of alumni donations). Third, dining halls with distinct menus, no swipe system and frequent, impromptu BBQs on quads. Fourth, Middlebury's U.S. News Ranking, placing it fourth among liberal arts colleges at the time. There are real reasons to challenge the importance of rankings, but I'd be lying if I said it wasn't a factor.

And last but not least (and my personal favorite): a ski mountain.

And while we still have the ski mountain, some of our other unique features have undeniably weakened over the last decade. Even the ski mountain has a worse logo and an objectively terrible new entrance sign (change that back!). We must take action to preserve these elements that make Middlebury unique and market them effectively.

Growing up, the father of one of my best friends taught at Vassar College. His belief in the importance of small class sizes and access to professors focused on instruction sold me on a liberal arts education. Middlebury delivered that in spades — I'm even producing a Film and Media Culture professor's feature film. Several faculty members have become my lifelong friends, creative partners, and served as persistent ties to Middlebury, for which I am thankful.

I expected to form close bonds with professors. What surprised me, and something for which I am equally thankful, are the bonds I formed with Middlebury's talented staff.As a film major, I split my time between film studies and production. A Middlebury staff member built the college's production expertise, filling a critical knowledge gap. That staff member helped hire the faculty to steer the more nascent production wing into a center of international renown. They dedicated late (sometimes sleepless) nights on set, taught some of my favorite classes and became as important a part of my Middlebury experience as any faculty member. With this in mind, I read about the penny-pinching, bureaucratic rationale for establishing "market wages" for librarians. The article is worth reading for more detail, though the term "skill matrix pay system" gives the gist.

Beyond being a film major, I was also an Economics major. So I'll ask upfront: How can enough comparable "markets" exist that are as rural, isolated and high-esteemed as Middlebury College?

JUNE SU/ THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

Dining servies staff staff working in Proctor Dining Hall.

We must avoid broadening that "market" by including less competitive institutions. Suppose Middlebury is to remain competitive with Amherst College, Bowdoin College and Williams College. In that case, we must pay for the same level of expertise and potentially a markup to overcome our regional isolation.

I won't claim to have studied Middlebury's finances in detail. Before cutting costs at the college (i.e., "right-size" staff wages), we must openly confront the most significant drain on Middlebury's resources. It's easy for a McKinsey-type consultant to identify micro-cost savings. It's significantly more difficult for an institution to evaluate its balance sheet and assess its big-ticket investments. One investment springs to mind: The Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey (MIIS). Monterey is one of the drivers of the college's $6.7 million budget deficit for the fiscal year 2025; in this same fiscal year, they cut the 400k in discretionary pay for staff members. Is funding MIIS worth losing Middlebury College staff members' institutional knowledge in Vermont? As an alum who cares deeply about Middlebury College, I say no.

Retaining qualified staff with unquantifiable institutional knowledge and a deep commitment to Middlebury and Vermont is not just a criterion but a necessity for the continuity and stability of our community.

The corporatization of colleges is not unique to Middlebury, but it's not inevitable either. Middlebury needs a leader who embraces unconventional ideas and properly values the labor of the people who enable it to function. And yes, that should include good-faith discussions about faculty and staff organizing (this is Bernie's Vermont, after all!). These decisions must happen before Middlebury's institutional knowledge is destroyed in the name of "cost savings."

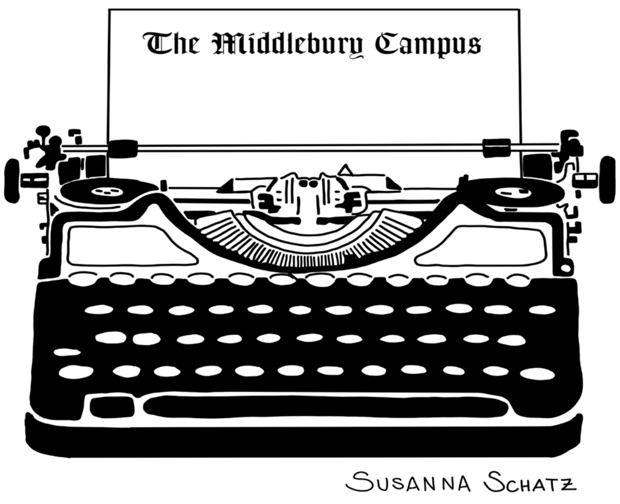
It's a challenging time to be a college president. Middlebury's next president is stepping into an even more complex role. This job requires repairing the college's community and culture. Bold actions, a clearly stated goal to keep Middlebury competitive with peer institutions and a commitment to compensating its staff are essential.

And here's a secret: It starts with the staff.

A message to faculty voting in tomorrow's credit reduction motion

Editorial

The editorial represents the opinion of the Middlebury Campus Editorial Board.



SUSANNA SCHATZ

Tomorrow, Friday, Nov. 8, faculty members will vote on whether to decrease the credit requirement needed to graduate from 36 credits to 34 credits. Additional changes would allow students to declare their majors later in their Middlebury careers and prevent future classes of students from using AP and IB courses for credit here. The proposal, which originated with the Student Government Association (SGA) last spring and is now being considered by the full faculty, merits more attention by our community than it has received so far.

Our discussion of the proposed changes focused on a variety of different academic proposals at Middlebury, from implementing an A.I. distribution requirement to how we feel about flexibility for seniors who take a third class to balance the job search. We call on professors who will be voting to think about how their decision will affect their students and our ability to choose a unique path in our education. Have an open discussion in your classes today and tomorrow about whether students would support the motion or not, and why. We did not come to one unanimous decision among ourselves, but we urge you to make space for student voices in your classrooms before you cast a vote tomorrow.

Simply put, a credit reduction would likely enable students to have more flexibility in how they navigate their semester-by-semester experience. If a student needs to redirect some of their academic energies to apply to jobs or graduate school, they should be allowed to choose to do so without having all four of their classes suffer. The option to drop down to a course load of three classes for a semester might even allow students to reinvest those spare hours into a course important for their major or post-graduate life, like a senior seminar, which they then might be able to engage with more fully.

Additionally — and as the fall and early winter of 2023 demonstrated quite clearly to us — quick and unexpected bursts of tragedy are capable of fully disrupting the emotional wellbeing of students, especially when it comes to managing stress levels and mental health while working hard on academics. If a tragic event occurs in the life of a student, they should be granted the flexibility to renegotiate their relationship to Middlebury, even if only briefly, in order to take care of themselves while still being committed to the classes and the obligations they can manage.

We believe our classmates have a concrete and sustained desire to make the most out of our time while studying at Middlebury and to take advantage of the opportunities available to us here. We trust that few students would use a reduction in credit requirements to bask in unproductive free time, but would apply it sparingly and in ways we judge to be most conducive to our learning and development. Whether that means focusing on a thesis we can be proud of or changing our academic courseload as needed, this is an important change we should trust students not to abuse.

With the current 36-credit requirement, students must earn one credit for all four J-Terms, although we are only required to be on campus for two of them. Reducing the credit requirement to 34 would provide students with more flexibility in January, especially given the challenges that can face international students who have to coordinate travel to and from campus in between semesters and for students who wish to use this time to complete internships that may not qualify for credit.

In terms of the current distribution requirements and potential new additions focused on climate change or AI — policies under consideration from the Faculty Council as well — we question the college's capacity to provide sufficient courses to cover such requirements. We have not yet heard a compelling case for any of these additions and how they would improve upon our academic experiences without further restricting our coursework.

We understand the skepticism of certain faculty members who may suspect that Middlebury students want to decrease academic rigor at the college to have time to "take Jell-O shots," as someone previously claimed. Your fears may be valid: At a time of decreasing attention spans and increasing immersion in the digital world, the concern that college students cannot handle tough classes and heavy readings is not unreasonable. Instead of assuming the worst of student intentions, however, we ask that you give us the benefit of the doubt. Students here by and large chose to attend an academically rigorous institution, and in our experience, many truly do want to learn here.

The reality of this vote is that it is unlikely to lead to a deluge of students dropping classes in order to party in Atwater, network for a job in finance or otherwise ignore their academics. It will most likely grant students who want more flexibility in their schedules to determine the best path for them. We are all in our late teens and early twenties, not high school students with little to no say in our studies. The only way we can prove our readiness to go into the world after graduation as fully-fledged adults is if we are treated like adults in our time at Middlebury.

To faculty, we ask that you include your students in the conversation, give us the chance to prove our independence and, most importantly, keep us in mind when you cast your vote tomorrow on the credit resolution.

SPECS Panther: Myth Busters Series: IUDs & Birth Control

Op-Ed

***Zoe Gregg** is a member of the class of 2026 and **Sophia Schuele** is a member of the class of 2025. They are SPECS Peer Educators.*

SPECS Panther is a mascot for SPECS (sex positive education for college students) and serves the Middlebury community. As a part of Health & Wellness Education, SPECS Panther seeks to educate and spark independent dialogue, not be the end-all be-all resource on campus. We encourage Midd Kids to break down the walls of silence by engaging in sex-positive conversation — wherever, with whomever, and about whatever is most comfortable, easy and safe for you. Our editions will be fun and educational!

Birth control can be an overwhelming topic. Social media, news reports and day-to-day conversations are rife with false information surrounding contraception. SPECS is here to break down some misconceptions and provide accurate resources for students, although we acknowledge that we are NOT medical providers and therefore do not offer direct advice nor recommendations. An informed, mutual understanding of available birth control methods is an important part of informed consent, and all parties engaging in a sexual activity are responsible for prioritizing one another's reproductive health. Often the responsibility of thinking about and accessing birth control falls on partners with uteruses, but that doesn't mean that people without uteruses shouldn't be informed about it.

The main categories for birth control options are hormonal, barrier, and non-hormonal or non-barrier. Specifically, hormonal methods include the use of progestin or estrogen intrauterine devices (IUDs) like Mirena, Liletta, Kyleena or Skyla, as well as the Pill, the Nexplanon arm implant, the Patch and the Nuvaring. Barrier methods encompass internal and external condoms, cervical caps and diaphragms. Non-hormonal or non-barrier methods include the copper IUD, fertility awareness and the 'pull out method.' Middlebury Health Services at Centeno House provides free condoms, consultations about IUDs and other hormonal or implant methods and free emergency contraception Plan B (with an appointment). Call their nurse line at (802)-443-3290 to make an appointment to discuss your options. The Middlebury Health & Wellness Education office also supplies condoms, which can be found in Ross basement (next to their office) and in McCullough.

With this general understanding of birth control methods, here are five common myths we want to bust about birth control:

Myth 1: IUDs cause breast cancer

A 2024 Danish study on hormonal IUDs and their relation to breast cancer was recently prominently cited in The New York Times. Importantly, there are conflicting studies about this topic and the media's wording of this specific study is misleading. This recent study, which looked at levonorgestrel IUDs (hormonal), observed a very small correlation between levonorgestrel IUDs and breast cancer. Its conclusion was based on an additional 14 out of 10,000 women who use a levonorgestrel IUD developing breast cancer after five years compared to the average. The study did not have a control group, meaning there could have been other factors not related to the IUD, like genetics or smoking history, that caused breast cancer to develop. In comparison to the one in eight (1,250/10,000) chance that the average American woman will develop breast cancer, the likelihood of developing breast cancer from a levonorgestrel IUD is very slim. In fact, multiple other studies conclude that the use of IUDs is linked to a decrease in prevalence of invasive cervical cancers.

Myth 2: The only reason people take the Pill is to prevent pregnancy

Though pregnancy prevention is a primary reason some choose an oral contraceptive option, a variety of other reasons exist too. Managing acne, heavy periods, bone thinning, anemia, premenstrual syndrome and premenstrual dysphoric disorder are some of the associated benefits of birth control. Furthermore, it can help prevent ovarian and endometrial cancers and infections of the ovaries, uterus or Fallopian tubes. Additionally, combined and progestin-only pills may lower the risk of an ectopic pregnancy, which is a dangerous condition that occurs when an egg is fertilized outside of the uterus. Keep in mind that one form of birth control that works well for one person might not work well for everyone. Speak to your medical provider to decide how you can best manage your reproductive health.

Myth 3: Birth control harms fertility

There have been no statistically significant studies that show that birth control negatively affects fertility. People who wish to get pregnant and stop taking birth control, and who do not have other underlying fertility problems, are not having a more difficult time getting pregnant than people who have never taken birth control. If someone has fertility concerns relating to birth control or other topics, consult a medical provider.

Myth 4: Plan B is the abortion pill / You can't take plan B more than "X" times

The "Morning-After Pill" and the abortion pill are made up of two different medications and work in two distinct ways. The morning-after pill contains the emergency contraceptive levonorgestrel. If taken within five days of unprotected intercourse, levonorgestrel lowers the chance of becoming pregnant by delaying ovulation so the egg does not release and thus cannot be fertilized by the sperm. The morning-after pill is not recommended as a regular-use contraceptive (potentially unpleasant side effects are common), but there is no limit on how many times one can take it. One can buy the morning-after pill, like Plan B, at a drugstore or for free at Centeno House (with an appointment). Alternatively, one can be prescribed Ella, a specific emergency contraception brand that contains ulipristal acetate. Unlike the morning-after pill, the abortion pill is used when fertilization has already occurred and a person is pregnant. The abortion pill uses Mifepistrone and blocks pregnancy hormones, which then causes the pregnancy to end. While state-to-state guidelines differ, acquiring abortion pills requires some sort of medical consultation. You can get the abortion pill by visiting Women's Health at Porter Hospital, Planned Parenthood (in Burlington or Rutland) or through an online medical consultation.

Myth 5: You need a prescription for birth control

Birth control can take many forms, and internal or external condoms do not require a prescription or a doctor's appointment. Spermicidal lube is also an over-the-counter option, although it must be noted that it can cause irritation, does not protect against STIs and is 79-86% effective. In 2023, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved a no-prescription-needed daily birth control pill called the O-pill. The O-pill is a progestin-only birth control pill that is 98% effective when used correctly to reduce the chance of pregnancy and can be purchased at a drugstore, grocery store or online.

These five debunked myths present only a fraction of prevalent sexual-health misinformation that exists in online and in-person circles, so it is vital to fact-check and utilize accurate resources. If you have any other myths or sexual-health questions, use the anonymous form at go/askspecs and we will answer them on our Instagram page!

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The Middlebury Campus

WHAT I HAVE LEARNED THROUGH A YEAR IN GRIEF

By **MANDY BERGHELA**
Senior Local Editor

For me and many other students, this past year has been a journey through a grief that feels endless. There are moments when sadness resurfaces unexpectedly, bringing the painful reminder that one of my closest friends is no longer here. Nov. 7 marks a year since the passing of my good friend Ivan Valerio '26, and I've found myself reflecting deeply on what it means to carry this loss.

I met Ivan my first week of coming to Middlebury. We are both Filipino-American, so we had that instant cultural connection. He was like a brother to me, because we had so many similarities in our backgrounds, and he would always jokingly call me "Ate," the Filipino term to refer to your female elders… because I am exactly two months older than he was. He cooked really good Filipino dishes that reminded me of my mom's and had similar mannerisms to the family I grew up with. It was little things like that that had brought me home.

So when Ivan passed, I felt like a part of myself was lost as well. I lost a part of my culture, and I lost a part of home. However, I have started to understand that even though he is gone, he has remained an enduring part of who I am today. Although in no way am I done grieving, I have had time in the past year to reflect, and I realized that I have learned a lot from him.

Losing a friend to suicide of course has the feeling of loneliness and sadness, as most grief does, but it is amplified by guilt, shame and confusion. The past year has made me question my own relationship to him. I've asked myself if I had been making our friendship larger than it was after his passing in fear that I would forget it if I didn't. The past year also has made me realize that I have this constant need to put the blame on someone, whether that be the administration, other students or myself. Early on, I asked myself, why can I no longer text my friend? Why can I no longer have a Proc dinner with my friend and debrief my latest unattainable crush? Why can't I see him anymore? Where is he? Now that it has been a year, I realize I still ask myself these things, but I also think about what he has taught me.

Lesson One: Embrace new skills and hobbies. The Middlebury Campus office sits just below the Hepburn grand piano, and sometimes the melody filters through the walls, transporting me back to freshman year, listening to Ivan learn to play. Despite having no prior experience, he became really skilled, and his dedication to learning something new was inspiring. I can still hear him playing the theme from "Your Lie in April," and his 'you can do anything if you just try' mentality is something I carry with me now. Before, I wasn't particularly adventurous, but over the past year, I've committed to broadening my horizons and learning new things. I've tried new painting techniques, learned to cook traditional Filipino dishes, snowshoed up a mountain and even gone skydiving. Next on my list to try? Knitting — maybe that's the skill I'll take on next.

Lesson 2: Perform random acts of kindness. Ivan easily is the kindest person I have met at Middlebury, if not my entire life, and I am grateful to have been able to call him a friend, as not everyone was privileged enough to have met him and known his compassion. Once, as I prepared to head home for the holidays, he helped me pack up my dad's car — even though I hadn't asked. Another time, during Thanksgiving break two years ago, he walked over a mile with me, helped carry my luggage to the Amtrak station, insisting on helping simply because he wanted to, and because that's what friends do. In the hustle culture of Middlebury, it is easy for us to get lost in our own worlds, overwhelmed by deadlines. Ivan showed me that making time for small acts of kindness can leave a lasting impact. We all have the capacity to be kind, yet we sometimes forget that these little gestures of support can mean the world to someone else. Honoring Ivan's memory means taking those extra moments to be there for others, creating the kind of compassionate world he led.

Lesson 3: Show up for your friends in college. I'm incredibly grateful for the friends I've made at Middlebury, but it's sobering to realize that this is likely the only time in my life I'll live in the same place as all of them. College is brief, so I want to make the most of it by being present and supportive of my friends. Ivan always made time for those around him. When I first started writing for The Campus, I was anxious about conducting interviews, but Ivan was my very first interviewee in my first article, and he made it feel like an easy, casual conversation. I still carry that approach into my interviews now.

Ivan always showed up. He showed up to his friends' plays, dance shows and any project they needed help with. He showed up not just because he could, but because he valued supporting his friends in their passions. We're all juggling a million things here, and it is easy to get caught up in our own obligations, but Ivan taught me that taking the time to support each other — whether by attending a show, cheering at a game or even reading their friends' Campus article — makes college a more meaningful experience. We all have friends doing amazing things that deserve to be celebrated, and it's important to show them love.

The one year anniversary does not mean everything becomes okay. I still get emotional — often, actually. I reread his birthday text to me the other day from summer 2023, he wrote "I'm truly so grateful to have met you. You've made such an impact on my life that's truly hard to express in words. It's been so fun making memories with you, and I am excited to make more next semester Ate Mandy." I would give anything to turn back time and tell him just how much he impacted my life, how grateful I am for him and how deeply his kindness still resonates with me and everyone who knew him.

I'm never going to see Ivan again. I've accepted that. But his legacy lives on in the way I try to live now. I carry forward his courage to embrace new things, his compassion to be kind even when it's inconvenient, and his unwavering dedication to showing up for others. Ivan taught me that, above all, our time here matters most when we use it to care for each other. That is exactly what I intend to do.

MANDY BERGHELA / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS

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Jerusalem Quartet returns to campus with rousing program

COURTESY PHOTO / AARON KIMBALL
The Jerusalem Quartet pictured at their 2018 debut in Robison Hall.

By YUHAN ZHANG
Contributing Writer

On Nov. 2, the Jerusalem Quartet flooded the Mahaney Arts Center with passionate string music ranging from classical to modern. Celebrating their 30th season, Jerusalem Quartet returned to Middlebury with a program of Haydn, Shostakovich and Dvorák.

The Jerusalem Quartet is a regular performer on stages across the world. The group is composed of four distinguished and accomplished artists: Alexander Pavlovsky (Violin), Sergei Bresler (Violin), Ori Kam (Viola) and Kyril Zlotnikov (Cello). The Jerusalem Quartet has redefined the tradition of string chamber music with their humanistic core and balance between high and low tones. They have recorded string quartets from music masters like Schubert, Ravel and Debussy. Their recordings have received numerous awards including the Diapason d'Or and the BBC Music Magazine Award for Chamber Music.

Haydn's "Quartet in B-flat Major, Op. 50, No. 1/ Hob.III:44 ('Prussian')" was the first composition of the performance. In early 1780, Wolfgang Mozart and Franz Haydn started a conversation in which notes became words. The two extraordinary musicians expressed their admiration for each other using quartets.

"I think Haydn is our most famous underappreciated composer," Professor Emeritus of Music Larry Hamberlin said in a lecture before the concert. "The thing about Haydn's music is that it is comedy. If you think that there are things that can be said in comedy that are hard you talk about in other ways, then maybe it's possible that something that makes you laugh can also make you think. Maybe even makes you feel it. And I think Haydn's music does all those things."

The Jerusalem Quartet sounded playful and vivacious as they incorporated four movements of this quartet into their performance — as if the four players were having a thought-provoking and funny conversation.

"String Quartet No. 12 in D-flat Major, Op. 133" by Dmitri Shostakovich, the second composition of the performance, is a testament to hope and strength. Suffering from illness, Shostakovich used his every breath to write this piece which features a 12-tone system that has no center and no rest.

"Just like Haydn has serious things to say in comic music, Shostakovich has rather light things to say in the serious, tragic music," Hamberlin said.

"The short notes created a kind of bouncy effect, and it felt like it was in the middle of sad and happy feelings," agreed concert attendee Youyou Zhang '28.

The third composition of the performance, "String Quartet No. 13 in G Major, Op. 106," furthers the program's bittersweet combinations. Written by Antonin Dvořák, the piece layers excitement with melancholy.

"Haydn writes his quartets for the four players to have a conversation. Shostakovich was writing for the four members of that specific quartet. Dvořák, in contrast, is just writing a big, beautiful piece of music that he wants lots of people to listen to and enjoy," Hamberlin noted.

There were lots of nodding heads and bouncing fingers when the Jerusalem Quartet was playing this piece — it was an undeniable crowd pleaser.

"I was sitting on the first row so I could sense the interflow [of the quartet]," Zhang said. "The cello player [Kyril Zlotnikov] was making eye contact with every player in and between the movements: he was almost like the leader. The first violinist [Alexander Pavlovsky] was so passionate that he almost stood up in the third piece, which was my favorite piece in the show."

Allison Coyne Carroll, Performing Arts Series director, shared some thoughts on why the performers chose these three works to be played.

"As a programmer, I am often offered a small menu of options for the artists to perform so they can play similar programs and minimize the repertoire they need to carry on tour," Coyne Carroll wrote in an email to The Campus. "For the Jerusalem Quartet, I could choose between two works after intermission: Mozart's "Dissonance" or Dvořák's G Major quartet. While Mozart is an interesting piece, I find the Dvořák to be a dynamic and compelling work — with a more complex harmonic structure for our theory classes to explore."

Coyne Carroll also added that Dvořák's quartet also has an American connection, as it was written during the composer's years living in the U.S, which she thought would be a nice way to end the program in anticipation of the national election this week.

For Coyne Carroll, the Jerusalem Quartet was a welcome addition to the Performing Arts Series lineup.

"Saturday's program explored some of the most important voices in chamber music, played impeccably by the Jerusalem Quartet—who are lauded for exhibiting depth, precision, and passion in their playing," Coyne Carroll wrote. "Hosting their return to Middlebury—and to such a welcoming audience—was a thrill."

"FAR OUT" EMPOWERS STUDENT LANDSCAPE OF VISUAL ART

By ANTHONY CINQUINA
Contributing Writer

Mark McGoey '26.5's visual art exhibit "Far Out" opened on the evening of Oct. 25 to a warm crowd of friends and faculty. The collection is modest, and each individual work is made all the more memorable for it.

The exhibit toes the line between representation and abstraction; that may be a dragon-lizard-fish you see, or a man made of water playing the trumpet. Whatever your interpretation, these images readily present themselves to the eye as elegant brushstrokes and vibrant colors.

And McGoey's use of color is magnetic. As I walked past conversations in huddled semi-circles around each painting, it seemed to me that a majority of conversation focused on the 'bold' colors, the emotions those colors evoke and what the palette of the collection conveys. Mark was inevitably the victim of the curious spectator's incessant inquisition (I was also a culprit), though he expertly avoided retreating to clarification and instead let the questions linger and coalesce into a broader mystery. The snack table was also a nice bonus.

The paintings have an incredible depth, as if they were sculpted up into audacious and colorful casts and then flattened onto canvas. It is fun to get lost in the curves and sharp edges, in the scabrous landscapes of paint.

McGoey's entire effort is inspiring. The existence of these kinds of self-started artistic initiatives are undeniably important to cultivating a landscape that allows for and encourages students of equal talent to produce and showcase their work.

For McGoey, the question of building a more robust foundation for the visual arts is of incredible importance. I had the chance to speak with him and get his thoughts on the issue, and the conversation boiled down to a simple fact: We can do better.

"Middlebury in particular is a huge community of supremely talented people," he told me. "But there are very few avenues for that talent to be shown."

Even within the existing infrastructure that allows for this kind of artistic expression, McGoey encountered a few roadblocks on the way to fully realizing his exhibit. He had a difficult time putting together the gallery, as balancing logistics management with academic and social obligations proved to be a demanding task. It was only with the help of the Student Activities Office (SAO) and Director of the Johnson Memorial Building and Manager of the Johnson Gallery, Colin Boyd, that McGoey managed to see it through. McGoey did it to prove to himself and others that it's possible, and that more students should try it themselves.

"We have a wonderful, vibrant, music community. That's there and that is amazing, and that's largely an inspiration for me," McGoey said. Visual art, he thinks, needs to be part of the regular, consistent and frequent social ecosystem. Think Wednesday Open Mic Party (WOMP) but for sculpting, painting or sketching.

"School support is necessary, but this doesn't need to be academic," McGoey said. "In a liberal arts curriculum, everything is supposed to go beyond the classroom."

But our campus' current artistic scene is not all so grim, and McGoey was sure not to leave me with that impression. He mentioned the 'Creating Art Together' club, which is a great space for students to share and explore modes of self-expression through art. On Nov. 14, the club is hosting a student gallery in Johnson. Work can still be submitted at go/catgallery24.

McGoey also mentioned WRMC's 'FM-Phasis' Zine, a collection of student art submissions including prose, poetry, cartoons, collages and interviews. They have fall and spring editions of the publication, and the fall edition is currently open to submissions.

Mark alluded to the re-emergence of the previously defunct student-led 'M-Gallery' which used to be located in the Old Stone Mill building. Mark's exhibition is the unofficial reinitiation of the M-Gallery, and although he made it clear that the project is still a work in progress, he urges people to keep their eyes peeled for upcoming events associated with the M-Gallery.

McGoey believes that the visual arts scene at Middlebury is headed in the right direction. Urging others to jump on the trend, he encouraged people to stay active and engaged with the artistic environment of the college.

"Inertia is moving that way, so why not hop on the train," he said.

COURTESY PHOTO / AIDAN LEVY
Gallery-goers take in Mark McGoey '26.5's new visual arts exhibit, "Far Out".

The double dream of American Football

By COLE CHAUDHARI
Managing Editor

Two Saturdays ago, I traveled to Brooklyn to see the band American Football on their tour commemorating the 25th anniversary of their first album's release. "American Football" — sometimes nicknamed LP1 — was released on Sept. 14, 1999, and changed emo music forever.

Though there have been albums classified as "emo" that predate "American Football" — "Rate Your Music", ever the authority, informs me that 1993 marks the first sprinklings of the criteria being met — this album perfectly actualized what is now known as midwest emo, a wonderfully imprecise genre name (as they all are, and must be).

Referring more closely to a particular sound palette than an actual regional specificity, midwest emo blends into coherence the genre of emo, with all of its thrashing and rough emotive passion, with the cooler and calculated guitar work and time signature creativity of math rock. "American Football" is a record that brings this pairing into ingenious fruition, finding the restless and wanting desperation of the heart shaking hands with the brain's clever harmonic inventiveness, without either of the two modes ever feeling underpowered.

That Saturday night, with all of its unseasonable warmth and golden late-October splendor, was perhaps an ideal admixture of time and circumstance in which to experience that record, live and in completion. "American Football" is a production of perpetual autumn — if, for no other reason, the second track is titled "The Summer Ends" — and is a vessel for many emotional registers, none of them happy but all of them affixed to the gentle dissolution of seasons and former selves, to people folding back into themselves and emerging again as strangers.

So, already a work of retrospectivity, the anniversary concert allowed for the listeners and the band to stand together and turn backwards, conjoining the visions of maker and receiver to review not only the album but the various ways in which we have grown up alongside the nine songs that compose it. At one point during the show, singer and guitarist, Mike Kinsella, mentioned that even though the songs are over a quarter-century old, he can still surrender himself to the memories of their creation, and of all the thwarted, embittered romances which enable(d) them to be.

The main set of the concert began with "Five Silent Miles", a very early instrumental tune, and proceeded into all but the first track from LP1 — a fact I'll return to later — played in the order in which the songs appear on the record. The second set was decidedly less organized, featuring songs from their second and third albums which, despite the band's perennial entrenchment in subcultures, never achieved even half as much critical acclaim and culty adherence as "American Football". A song I wish appeared on the setlist that night but was sadly absent is the band's cover of "Fade Into You", the dreamy mission statement of Mazzy Star which, in 2019, American Football transmuted into a seven-minute odyssey of chiming, arpeggiating guitars, crashing cymbals, shining horns and gorgeously plaintive pedal steel.

To end their show, as they do all of their concerts, American Football played the first song off of "American Football", titled "Never Meant" — which has recently spiked in popularity due to being included in a Tim Walz campaign video — which heralded in the collective emotional apotheosis of the two-odd hours of music. When people discuss American Football, especially in spaces where the music mainstream rubs shoulders with the just-decentered world of midwest emo, no song in their discography emblematizes their artistic ethos more than "Never Meant."

In some sense, "Never Meant" crumbles under the pressure of its own stereotyping: It's a remarkable song, striated with all the necessary footprints of midwest emo — intricate riffs falling over each other, almost painfully simple lyrics and vocals exchange precision for affective slam — but it's come to be a shorthand for the original iconography of the subgenre. Today, especially online, speaking about or playing "Never Meant" is often an allusive gesture, pointing less towards the eminent brilliance of the music itself and more towards the aesthetic associations out of which midwest emo culturally unfurled: basement concerts, suburban angst, long gray afternoons, flannel, Miller High Life, gas station parking lots, regret.

But within the space of the concert venue, with the straining voices of the audience collaborating in the warm air with Kinsella's hearty wailing, all reservations about memes, guilt and performative listening were gone. My fellow concertgoers, who I imagine were in similar or possibly stronger tempests of heartbreaking sense-memory assaults, climbed into the half-imaginative, half-real world of "American Football"'s most definitive assertion and joined in an incantatory expressivity of togetherness in sound, in season and in memory.

This is where the beauty of the music and the circumstance was, and will forever be — this eruption of individual (re)experiences summoned forth by a shared devotionality to song, a band, a common metaphysics of falling apart that is at once so particularized across the lives of each audience members and, yet, recognizably embodied within the confines of the album's mission.

The magic of a reunion tour is, I think, that you can inhabit two worlds simultaneously, without any static interference or splitting: the material plane of where you are, the heads obscuring your view and the color of the lights and the immanent miracle of you standing in the music; and then the sepia world of days long passed, and all the people, places and things that populate the little cosmologies of these songs in the historiography of your life. And perhaps the final lesson is just that astonishing duality — that this stuff is still right there, and that

COLE CHAUDHARI / THE MIDDLEBURY CAMPUS
American Football closing their concert with "Never Meant".

SHAWN RYAN ’88 IS ROOTING FOR YOU

By CATHERINE GOODRICH
Senior Arts & Culture Editor

If Shawn Ryan ’88 has anything in common with the hard-nosed shows that make up his acclaimed career, it’s that he’s as easy to talk to as a seasoned officer by the water cooler.

Ryan is the award-winning writer, showrunner and producer of shows including “The Shield,” “The Chicago Code,” “S.W.A.T” and most recently, “The Night Agent.” Hailing from Rockford, Illinois, his Midwestern humility shines when talking about coming into his own as a writer at Middlebury – Ryan began college as an Economics major on the soccer team and graduated with a BA in theater and a passion for writing. One need look no further than the title of his television production company, MiddKid Productions, to glean Ryan’s appreciation for this undergraduate creative arc.

Ryan’s connection with the college runs deep – he’s an active partner with the Center for Careers and Internships (CCI), serves on the Middlebury Performing Arts Council and on the Middlebury Board of Trustees. During his most recent campus visit, I sat down with him to discuss his time in college and what a Middlebury education can look like. These are lightly edited excerpts from the conversation.

Catherine Goodrich: What memories stand out to you when you think about college?

Shawn Ryan: I just wanted to do everything and I thought the people I was meeting in my class and at the school, I thought they were fascinating – a lot of them were much smarter than me and I embraced that, like, how can I learn from them? How can I learn about the world from them? Because I wasn’t a particularly well-traveled kid at that point. So my memories are just like, ‘Oh my God, what is this world?’ I just wanted to drink it all up. I wanted to do everything I could.

CG: When you were here in January, one of my favorite points from your talk was about having a theater professor who you knew was good and you could try to impress but you were like, ‘you know, I’m just going to write something me and my roommates would enjoy.’

SR: Well, I didn’t know that I could impress him (laughs). Yeah, yeah, in fact, I assumed I couldn’t. So rather than try, I wrote something that me and my buddies on the 4th floor of Stewart would think was funny. And that was a good lesson for me because you write something that’s personally meaningful to you and sometimes the most personal things are the most universal. So that was a good lesson.

CG: I’m curious what the plays you wrote at Middlebury were about.

SR: I’d say if there’s a thread in the first few plays I wrote it was just young people trying to understand the world and their place in it. You know, I didn’t project at that point onto worlds that I didn’t know and didn’t understand. It was just, ‘Why am I having trouble with my girlfriend?’ You know, ‘What’s this relationship with my best friend?’ It wasn’t until I started writing for the TV world that I expanded my canvas beyond the immediate world that I knew.

CG: When you’re back on campus, what differences stand out to you?

SR: There’s a spirit I think of Middlebury, that hasn’t changed. It’s very recognizable when I come here, and yet there are a lot of things that are different. I’ve become a very nostalgic person in my 50s now. And I get very nostalgic when I come back here and this place, it’s very temporary. I don’t know if you’ll recognize this theatrical reference but it’s almost like going to Brigadoon for me. This sort of mystical world that pops up every now and then, because this is so different than what my life in Los Angeles is like. So when I come back here, it’s almost kind of like refilling my gas tank. It’s reminding me of my roots as a writer. It’s a bittersweet reminder of how many years have passed, but also a pride that I’ve done enough to be worthy to be asked to come back here to work on the board and talk to screenwriting and theater students. So that makes me proud that I’ve gone from being a not-so-confident student to someone who feels comfortable in his skin and comfortable talking about my experience and trying to pass out lessons I’ve learned to, you know, the next generation.

CG: What do you hope for Middlebury students today?

SR: What I would hope for students is that they take advantage of all the opportunities on campus to explore different things, to figure out what their hidden strengths are, to figure out what talents they have that are unexplored, or if they’ve been explored, how that could they be advanced and raised up, and find a path to be the best people they can and have the best impact in the world they can. You know, I think Middlebury students have an outsized impact on the world. The people who are coming here and learning about political science or economics or computer science or theater, – Middlebury is about finding the thing that isn’t just going to be your job but is going to be your passion. I would hope for every student that they can find that.

COURTESY PHOTO / AUGUST SIEGEL

Shawn Ryan ’88 visits the Hepburn Zoo where some of his first works were performed.

All for One and One for All

Avery Goldstein

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ACROSS

1 Big name in ice cream
5 Gelato serving
10 Stork's delivery
14 How Hozier likes his whisky
15 Chat, informally
16 Taj Mahal locale
17 Shells, e.g.
18 ___ of faith
19 Harvest
20 Whine
23 Catchall category
24 Mexican peninsula
28 Stephen of "The Crying Game"
29 Flowers for 31 down?
33 Electronic music genre
34 ___ Fables
36 Principal role
37 Expression said while revealing a royal flush
41 Blacken
42 Gooey treat
43 Oxygen-dependent organism
46 Eye affliction
47 Rohatyn Center for Global Affairs house, for short
50 Gymnasium decorations
52 Bread-maker from district 12
54 Basis for a moneyless economy
58 Restaurant handout
61 Sunset dirección
62 Word that is notably missing an important vowel, like this puzzle
63 Even once
64 Turn back to zero
65 Ultimatum ender
66 Portal
67 Wade noisily
68 Chapel hill glider

DOWN

1 Charm
2 Knock down a peg
3 Big name in pianos and motorcycles
4 Emma of "La La Land"
5 Read, as a QR code
6 Word that precedes feet or shoulder
7 Universal donor's type, briefly
8 Egg maker
9 Fly that's caught?
10 Hull huggers
11 It's just a number
12 Bikini top
13 Talk incessantly
21 Equipped for battle
22 Nail
25 Quaker pronoun
26 Take ___ (catch some Zs)
27 Tacit approval
30 Employ
31 May honorees
32 Inundates with emails
34 Duel personality?
35 Twerp
37 Seehorn of "Better Call Saul"
38 Merit
39 Like some humor or wine
40 Misty-eyed
41 Hailed ride
44 Aunt in "Ramona and Beezus'"
45 Blunders
47 Share again, as a joke
48 Relaxed
49 Stuck
51 Stainless stuff
53 ___ Park, Colorado
55 Exxon, previously
56 GPS suggestions
57 Meyers of late night
58 Two below XL
59 Midd dance troupe
60 New beginning?

SIDE HUSTLE: LOG ROLLING

By MAX MYERS
Contributing Writer

Welcome to The Side Hustle. Inspired by ESPN8: The Ocho — ESPN's annual segment where the sports network highlights more obscure sports — this column highlights the sports that The Campus typically reports on less frequently… until now.

Log rolling's roots can be traced back to the 19th-century Midwest's logging industry. In the region's rugged forests, lumberjacks faced a common challenge: they cut down so many trees that it caused log jams in rivers. Without modern machinery, these workers had to manually break up these jams by standing on the logs to move them. What began as a necessary occupational skill evolved into a competitive sport over time, as lumberjacks began challenging each other's log-riding abilities. Thus, the sport of logrolling was born.

Log rolling and Middlebury have a stronger relationship than most may think. Middlebury is the first college campus to have a log rolling club — and that club is still going strong today.

While no actual logs enter the school's natatorium, the team has two 65-pound synthetic logs, each equipped with three adjustable resistance paddles. These paddles are like fins that wrap around the log to give it the user's desired amount of resistance. The team meets every Sunday from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. and Thursdays from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. this semester.

The sport requires an immense amount of balance and support from the core. Once the athlete steps on floating the log, it immediately starts spinning, and they must move their feet up and down to keep themselves balanced.

Hayden Laster '25 has been rolling since his first year at Middlebury and has developed skills and techniques for the sport.

"Your head should be directly over the log while you balance with your hips," Laster said.

A beginner might use the paddles to start off, but over time they can progress to rolling without them entirely. Laster said that this can be accomplished with as quickly as a semester's worth of work if the roller is committed. Despite how the high velocity of the spinning log presents challenges in the sport, a beginner can gain experience quickly and join a strong community and team.

Once a roller has logrolled solo, they can progress to dueling. This is when two rollers stand on opposite sides and try to knock the other roller off their log. This activity is a favorite of the rollers, as it provides a great sense of friendly competition without being too serious.

Tyler Hadar '25 is the club's treasurer and has been with the team since spring 2023. He has become entranced by the sport.

"It is a great sport because not only is it an incredible sport, but also blends competitiveness with fun very well," Hadar said. He added that he is looking forward to the J-Term workshop the team will offer this winter.

The team has a collaborative practice with the Timber Sports club at the University of Vermont coming up on Nov. 17 from 12 to 3 p.m. This event is open to the public participation and spectatorship.

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COURTESY PHOTO / MAX MYERS

Log rollers Tyler Hadar '25 and Haden Laster '25 showcase a logrolling duel.

PFL WEEKLY

By DECO SIEFER & GREG WILHELM
PFL Weekly Hosts

Welcome back to PFL Weekly! We had a great episode this week, discussing NESCAC playoff excitement, the upcoming Saturday of all Saturdays and the Battell Bike Bandit strikes again! We talked with Ally Kennedy '27 and Megan Fuqua '27, sophomores on the no. one nationally-ranked field hockey team, and learned about coaching, recruiting and how it feels to be a part of a dynasty. We finished with a riveting Mount Rushmore of cereals, which resulted in some heated debate. Who do you think won? Thanks for listening!

Seven questions with Madaket Rzpeka '26

By JOHNATHAN BUCHHOLZ
Sports Editor

Madaket Rzepka '26, originally from Reading, Massachusetts, is in the midst of her third season on the Middlebury field hockey team. In this edition of Seven Questions, she explains how she landed at Middlebury, what it's like to be part of such a successful program, and how Middlebury has changed the trajectory of her life.

Jonathan Buchholz: How did field hockey lead you to Middlebury?

Madaket Rzepka: I was at the College Connection Showcase at UMass Amherst in Massachusetts, and I met Coach DeLorenzo there. We talked in the parking lot after the showcase for two hours. I thought she was a really amazing coach with a great coaching philosophy. I knew I was really interested in Middlebury after that. I had been reaching out to Middlebury before the showcase, but I really didn't want to go because my mom went to Middlebury, and I wanted to choose a different path. But after I met Coach DeLorenzo, I knew Middlebury was definitely on my list, and I came for a visit.

JB: What is the pressure like on a team as successful as Middlebury's?

MR: When I was a freshman, I was really intimidated because I was coming into an environment with all these national champions. I felt a little bit out of my league, but as you grow up through the Middlebury program, you just have access to amazing coaches and amazing teammates, and you're playing against the best competition you could possibly face. You're growing and learning every day along with them. So, you're welcomed into this culture where it's a growth mindset: Everything's about getting better. It's not a competition like you against this other person. It's about how I can compete with the version of myself from yesterday. We're not here to win every game. We're here to create the best game of field hockey possible. We want to raise the level of play, and we just love playing field hockey and we love making great passing patterns and elevating the level of play and that's really what it's all about.

JB: Are there any ways that the team kind of tries to give back to younger field hockey players?

MR: We run fall clinics, spring clinics and I believe a summer clinic. The local high school uses our field and we try to go watch their games and support them through that, but we also do a lot of work with the Yellow House.

JB: How has being at Middlebury shaped what you are interested in post-college?

MR: I came into Middlebury wanting to study neuroscience, but I took a chemistry lab my freshman spring, and I thought no way this is for me. My first year seminar was "The True Believer" with Professor Don Wyatt, and we read Eric Hoffer's book, "The True Believer: Thoughts On the Nature of Mass Movements." Through that first year seminar, I was able to apply to the Rohatyn Global Scholars (RGS) program. I wasn't really politically active in high school or that interested in global affairs, but when I came to Middlebury I got to try something I had wanted to get into in high school and now I have the opportunity.

JB: What are you thinking about post-graduation?

MR: I really want to go down to D.C. I am really interested in the State Department internship right now. Through RGS, I was exposed to the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, and I took Professor Jeffrey Lewis's J-Term course on nonproliferation tools in tech. I was an undergraduate researcher for the Institute that following spring, and this fall I'm working on researching the missile facilities and capabilities of North Korea. I'd love to continue working in the intelligence field, counterterrorism, and national defense. I'd love to work for the State Department or the Department of Defense.

JB: Is there any advice you would give your former self?

MR: Try everything. I think joining RGS was the most impactful thing I could have done with my time at Middlebury. I've been opened up to every resource that is imaginable here. I even did language school this past summer, studying French, and I was so scared to go abroad before that, and now I feel so prepared to go abroad and everything comes back to joining RGS as a freshman. Just pursue everything that's at your disposal because if you don't search for it, you're not gonna know it's there – there is so much available to you in college.

JB: Where's your favorite place to get work done?

MR: Haymaker Bun Co.

Editor's Note: This interview has been lightly edited for clarity.

COURTESY PHOTO / DARLEEN FERRARO

Madaket Rzpeka '26 weaving through several Connecticut College players.

MIDDLEBURY CROSS COUNTRY COMPETES AT NESCAC CHAMPIONSHIP MEET

By SIMON SCHMIEDER

Contributing Writer

"DIMOG." The confused jumble of letters painted on their chests spelled out nonsense. "I thought Middlebury students were smarter than that," one of the course officials joked. Eventually the final "D" ran across and the message was rearranged: "GO MIDD."

It was Saturday, Nov. 2, and the NESCAC cross country championship was set to begin as the Middlebury women toed the line.

The starting gun fired and the runners flew by, heading across the sports fields into the distance. This year's race was hosted by Bowdoin College and their course is notoriously quick. Beginning in a large grass practice field, runners immediately make their way to the edge of the athletic complex. Once on the perimeter trail, the course hugs the outer line of each sports field and eventually enters the woods.

A hard-packed trail snakes between the trees on the back half of the loop. The path narrows, wind dies down, and sun dips in and out. The dirt merges into grass again and a couple kilometers later, the course soon resumes on the same loop as before — and remains pancake flat the entire time. The 6-kilometer women's race completes this loop twice, while the men's 8-kilometer race rounds the perimeter three times.

In the women's race, Middlebury's Audrey MacLean '27 quickly separated herself from the rest of the pack along with a couple of other runners. Bea Parr '25 followed close behind in the chase pack, with the lead in this group flipping between runners throughout the race. Exiting the woods for the second time, the front of the race narrowed to just MacLean and Hamilton's Keira Rogan. With just over a quarter mile remaining, the two were dead even.

Approaching the final straightaway, MacLean made her move.

"I passed Keira and tried not to look back," she later recalled. The crowd roared, urging on both runners towards the finish. Sprinting to the line, Middlebury's MacLean crossed ahead of Rogan by just over one second, claiming the individual NESCAC title.

Middlebury's remaining points were scored by Parr, who came in 13th, Victoria Fawcett '26 in 22nd, Kate Ratcliffe '25 in 38th, and Naomi Atwood '28 in 44th. Violet Ross '25 finished in 49th, followed by Mary Cestaro '28 in 56th and Caroline VanSchaick '27 in 57th. Overall, the Middlebury women placed fourth as a team.

"It was definitely the hardest sprint I've done, but it was totally worth it," MacLean reflected.

Her teammates were key to her victory as well, as MacLean was motivated by the fact that "the rest of the team was working so hard" and that everyone "had been training to run with grit and run with their hearts."

Building on the theme of competing for the team, Ratcliffe expressed that she was happy to see so many of her teammates succeed at the meet.

"I was just feeling really stoked to do everything that I can for my teammates and run for them because we've all been putting in so much work and the vibes have been so great this season," Ratcliffe said. "So many of the girls had PRs today, and today was the day to do it."

For a few runners, Saturday's race was also the end of a long journey. "I just wanted to leave it all out there and do my best because it's my last cross country race and that's a really special thing," team co-captain Morgane Orcutt '25 reflected.

One hour later, the men's race began in similar fashion.

The starter gave his final instructions and all was quiet. "On your marks." Their heads tilted towards the ground and bodies leaned forward, coiled like springs under tension. Hundreds of spectators looked on from both sides of the starting straight and the chilly wind thickened. The starting pistol shot out, and moments later swarms of blues, whites, purples, reds and yellows flew by.

Middlebury's Drew Donahue '25 took the lead early, battling at the front with runners from Williams College, Bowdoin, Amherst College and Connecticut College. Soon entering the crucial middle section of the race, the Middlebury men fought hard for each place through the woods. At times completely out of sight, this is where much of the race was decided.

Rounding the final turn, Middlewbury packed a potent triple punch close behind the lead of the race. Benjamin Hughes '27 finished in fifth, followed by Ziggy Goddard '25 in sixth and Drew Donahue in eighth. All three ran within one second of each other.

Shef West '26 and Cam Miles '28 finished in 21st and 53rd to round out the top scoring five, and Harry Griff '26 and Tucker Jakobe '25 crossed the line in 56th and 57th respectively to complete Middlebury's top seven. In a historically close finish, the top four teams were separated by just 11 points. The Middlebury men's team finished third in the team standings behind Williams and Amherst, beating Tufts by one point.

Going into the meet, co-captain Goddard expected a fast race and "a tight spread among the top teams." Regardless, he felt that the 11-point spread was fairly uncommon for these competitions.

"It was a tough team battle," Goddard said. Like the women's team, a critical part of the men's race was also relying on and running for their teammates.

"It was really just about doing what we could and hoping our boys were stepping up behind me," Goddard said after the race.

An equally prevalent theme on Saturday was the tangible energy at the races. Reflecting on his first NESCAC meet, first year runner Miles called the atmosphere created by the other teams and spectators "loud and rowdy."

"I could just tell with the environment, there was a lot more pride on the line," Miles said.

Middlebury had a particularly strong showing among student supporters for the team as well.

"We had more than 20 people who weren't on the cross country team come support us, which I really appreciated and it made us see how much love there is for Middlebury cross country and the sport as a whole," Orcutt said following the race.

With the panther flag flying higher than any other, it was like an army charging into battle as students, parents, and coaches dashed from the woods to the fields as quickly as possible. The passion left out on the course by the runners and the feverish excitement of the crowd was palpable all of Saturday, and was a testament to the unique character of the NESCAC cross country championship meet. Both teams now turn to the closing stages of the postseason, and will hope to carry the energy from NESCACs moving into the final races of the 2024 season.

COURTESY PHOTO / WILL LAVEY